

2/20/11

**Series Title: "John's Gospel of Jesus: God in Flesh"**

**Today's Title:**

***"Fruitfulness of a Reclaimed Sinner"***

Scripture Reading: John 4:39-42

Text: John 4:39-42

*Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."*

**Introduction:** (Illustration from *The Life and Times of Whitefield*, Robert Philip, 1838, pp.12-13, 14, 30)

*"...yet I can remember such early stirrings of corruption in my heart, as abundantly convince me that I was conceived and born in sin; that in me dwelleth no good thing by nature; and that, if God had not freely prevented me by his grace, I must have been for ever banished from his presence. I was so brutish as to hate instruction; and used, purposely, to shun all opportunities of receiving it. I soon gave pregnant proofs of an impudent temper. Lying, filthy talking, and foolish jesting I was much addicted to, even when very young. Sometimes I used to curse, if not swear. Stealing from my mother I thought no theft at all, and used to make no scruple of taking money out of her pockets before she was up. I have frequently betrayed my trust, and have more than once spent money I took in the house, in buying fruit, tarts, etc., to satisfy my sensual appetite. Numbers of Sabbaths have I broken, and generally used to behave myself very irreverently in God's sanctuary. Much money have I spent in plays, and in the common amusements of the age. Cards, and reading romances, were my heart's delight. Often have I joined with others in playing roguish tricks; but was generally, if not always, happily detected: for this I have often since, and do now, bless and praise God....It would be endless to recount the sins and offences of my*

younger days....My heart would fail me at the remembrance of them, was I not assured that my Redeemer liveth to make intercession for me! However the young man in the gospel might boast, that he had kept the commandments from his 'youth up,' with shame and confusion of face I confess that I have broken them all from my youth. Whatever foreseen fitness for salvation others may talk of and glory in, I disclaim any such thing: it I trace myself from my cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned....If the Almighty had not prevented me by his grace, and wrought most powerfully on my soul – quickening me by his free Spirit, when dead in trespasses and sins, I had now either been sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, - or condemned, as the due reward of my crimes, to be for ever lifting up my eyes in torments. But such was the free grace of God to me, that though corruption worked so strongly in my soul, and produced such early and bitter fruits, - yet I can recollect, very early, movings of the blessed Spirit upon my heart. I had, early, some convictions of sin.”

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“The blessed Spirit was all this time purifying my soul. All my former gross, notorious, and even my heart sins, also, were now set home upon me; of which I wrote down some remembrances immediately, and confessed them before God morning and evening.”

[The biographer, Robert Philip observed: ...this led him direct to the gospel, and to the throne of grace. Unable to sustain such views of the evil of sin, and having failed, in all his former efforts, to remove a sense of guilt, by a series of observances, he was now shut up to the faith.]

“Though weak, I often spent two hours in my evening retirements, and prayed over my Greek Testament, and Bishop Hall’s most excellent ‘Contemplations.’”

[Philip observes: “While thus engaged in searching the Scriptures, he discovered the true grounds of a sinner’s hope and justification. The testimony of God concerning his Son, became ‘power unto salvation.’”]

“I found and felt, in myself, that I was delivered from the burden that had so heavily oppressed me. The spirit of mourning was taken from me, and I knew what it was truly to rejoice in God my Saviour.”

**Premise: *In Christ, lives marked by evil are made righteous***

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**Outline:**

**I. From Notorious to Notable**

**II. From Negativism to Nobility**

**III. From Nonchalance to Necessity**

**I. FROM NOTORIOUS TO NOTABLE**

v.39

**A. Note the strength of reputation**

1. consider the former testimony

a. she was restless; looking for something to bring real contentment and satisfaction

b. she filled her life with men; hoping that human relationships would fill the void

c. she espoused religious exercise in hopes that formal worship would create inner peace and harmony

c/w I Corinthians 6:9-11

- John Flavel [Enc. of Christian Quotations, p.948]

*“If the death of Christ was that which satisfied God for our sins, there is infinite evil in sin, since it would not be expiated but by an infinite satisfaction. Fools make a mock at sin, and there are few in the world who are fully sensible of its evil – but certainly, if God should exact of thee the full penalty, thy eternal sufferings could not satisfy for the evil there is in one vain thought. You may think it severe, that God should subject his creatures to everlasting sufferings for sin, and never be satisfied with them any more. But when you have well considered, that the Being against whom you sin is the infinitely blessed God, and how God dealt with the angels that fell, you will change your mind. Oh the depth of the evil of sin! If ever you wish to see how great and horrid an evil sin is, measure it in your thoughts, either by the infinite holiness and excellency of God, who is wronged by it; or by the infinite sufferings of Christ, who died to satisfy for it; and then you will have deeper apprehensions of its enormity. If the death of Christ satisfied God, and thereby redeemed us from the curse; then the*

redemption of souls is costly; souls are precious and of great value with God. “Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition; but with the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without spot.” Only the blood of God is an equivalent for the redemption of souls. Gold and silver may redeem from human, but not from hellish bondage. The whole creation is not a value for the redemption of one soul. Souls are very dear; he that paid for them found them so: yet how cheaply do sinners sell their souls. If Christ’s death satisfied God for our sins, how unparalleled is the love of God to poor sinners! If Christ, by dying, has made full satisfaction, then God can consistently pardon the greatest of sinners that believe in Jesus.

2. consider the changed testimony

- a. God gave her a pure love
- b. God gave her a holy boldness
- c. God gave her peace and fulfillment

- Gospel Hymn by Clara T. Williams, *Satisfied*

***All my lifelong I had panted for a drink from some clear  
spring,***

***That I hoped would quench the burning of the thirst I felt  
within.***

***Feeding on the husks around me, till my strength was almost  
gone,***

***Longed my soul for something better, only still to linger on.***

***Well of water ever springing, Bread of life so rich and free,  
Untold wealth that never faileth, my Redeemer is to me.***

***Hallelujah! I have found Him whom my soul so long has  
craved!***

***Jesus satisfies my longings – thru His blood I now am saved.***

***B. Note the sweeping influence of transformation***

*“Many Samaritans... believed in him because of the*

*woman’s testimony....”*

c/w Acts 1:6-8

c/w Acts 13:44-49

**C. Note the impact of God’s revelation**

*“He told me all that I ever did.”*

Note: Jesus was the very mouthpiece of Almighty God. He spent his short lifetime on this earth telling people about the Lord and of his desire to save them from their sins.

(Illustrations from Tan #7404 and #7407)

Daniel Webster’s testimony to his belief in Jesus Christ may be seen and read by anyone who cares to visit Marshfield, Mass., and the burial place of the great statesman. He lies buried half a mile back of his house, by the side of his wife and 3 children. His tomb is entirely unpretentious, being of rough granite with a sod roof.

Webster dictated his own epitaph on the day before his death. It is as follows:

Daniel Webster

Born January 18, 1782

Died October, 24, 1852

*“Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness, in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this globe, had sometimes shaken my reasons for the faith which is in me. But my heart has always assured and reassured me that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be a divine reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a mere human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it.”*

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A woman in a mid-Western town some years ago took an unusual method of testifying to her faith in Christ. Her friends for the most part were lukewarm and indifferent. Surface Christians, one might call them. One day she knew they would be passing by, she stood before a wooden Indian in front of a

cigar store and spoke to the Indian about Christ. When her

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friends ridiculed her for creating such a scene, she gave this defense: "I would rather be a real Christian and talk religion to a wooden Indian, than to be a wooden Christian who never talked religion to anyone."

## **II. FROM NEGATIVISM TO NOBILITY**

vv.40-41

### **A. Note the natural hostility between Samaritans and Jews**

1. racially despised
2. socially outcast
3. cynically distrusting

- Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Vol. III, pp.280-282

*"Now there arose a quarrel between the Samaritans and the Jews on the occasion following: it was the custom of the Galileans, when they came to the holy city at the festivals, to take their journeys through the country of the Samaritans; and at this time there lay, in the road they took, a village that was called Ginea, which was situated in the limits of Samaria and the great plain, where certain persons thereto belonging fought with the Galileans, and killed a great many of them. But when the principal of the Galileans were informed of what had been done, they came to Cumanus, and desired him to avenge the murder of those that were killed; but he was induced by the Samaritans, with money, to do nothing in the matter: upon which, the Galileans were much displeased, and persuaded the multitude of the Jews to betake themselves to arms, and to regain their liberty, saying that "slavery was in itself a bitter thing, but that when it was joined with direct injuries, it was perfectly intolerable." And when their principal men endeavored to pacify them, and promised to endeavor to persuade Cumanus to avenge those that were killed, they would not harken to them, but took their weapons, and entreated the assistance of Eleazar, the son of Dineus, a robber, who had many years made his abode in the mountains; with which assistance they plundered many villages of the Samaritans. When Cumanus heard of this action of theirs, he took the band of Sebaste, with four regiments of footmen, and armed the Samaritans, and marched out against the Jews, and caught them, and slew many of*

them, and took a great number of them alive; whereupon those that  
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were the most eminent persons at Jerusalem, and that both in regard  
of the respect that was paid them and the families they were of, as  
soon as they saw to what a height things were gone, put on sack-  
cloth and heaped ashes upon their heads; and by all possible means  
besought the seditious, and persuaded them that they would set  
before their eyes the utter subversion of their country, the conflagra-  
tion of their temple, and the slavery of themselves, their wives, and  
children which would be the consequences of what they were doing;  
and would alter their minds, would cast away their weapons, and for  
the future be quiet, and return to their own homes. These  
persuasions of theirs prevailed upon them. So they people dispersed  
themselves, and the robbers went away again to their places of  
strength; and after this time all Judea was overrun with robberies.”

**B. Note the gospel dynamic in redeeming lost sinners**

1. Jesus became their focus
2. Jesus produced an expansive curiosity
3. Jesus’ testimony became widely accepted

**III. FROM NONCHALANCE TO NECESSITY**

v.42

**A. One sinner telling another is of great value**

c/w Psalm 96:1-10

**B. Of greater value is one sinner tasting for himself**

- R.C. Sproul [Encl. of Chr. Quotes, pp.228 and 227]

*We know of people who have been “converted” many times. Every time there is a so-called church revival they go to the altar and get “saved.” One minister told of a man in his congregation who had been “saved” 17 times. During a revival meeting the evangelist made an altar call for all who wanted to be filled with the Spirit. The man who had been converted so often made his way toward the altar again. A woman from the congregation shouted, “Don’t fill him, Lord. He leaks!” Those who become “unconverted” were never converted in the first place.*

- John Bunyan

*But upon a day the good providence of God did cast me to*

*Bedford to work on my calling, and in one of the streets of that*  
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*town I came where there were 3 or 4 poor women sitting at a door in the sun and talking about the things of God; and being now willing to hear them discourse, I drew near to hear what they said, for I was now a brisk talker also myself in the matters of religion. But now I may say I heard, but I understood not; for they were far above, out of my reach; for their talk was about a new birth – the work of God on their hearts. And methought they spake as if Joy did make them speak; they spake with such pleasantness of scripture language and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world.*

**Conclusion:** (Illustration from Poems of a Lifetime, Oswald J. Smith, pp.217-218)

*Lord, send me out with heart aflame  
To win them to Thy fold;  
Of Jesus and His wondrous love  
The story must be told.*

*Lord, send me out, I care not where,  
With pow'r to win the lost;  
To tell them of redemption free  
Procured at awful cost.*

*Lord, send me out, it matters not  
How hard the task may be;  
The Gospel of Thy grace, I know,  
Can set poor sinners free.*

*Lord, send me out, oh, let me go,  
I dare not still delay,  
The day of grace will soon be o'er,  
Then let me speed away.*

**Premise:** *In Christ, lives marked by evil are made righteous*